

Council moves to regulate Internet cafes

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MENTOR-ON-THE-LAKE - Council repealed a six-month moratorium on Internet cafes and passed legislation to regulate "mechanical amusement devices and game rooms" at the March 8 council meeting.

The legislation had been tabled a number of weeks. A decision from Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine about whether Internet sweepstakes cafes were legal or not was anticipated weeks ago, but had not been presented. Law Director Jim Lyons had also wished for a higher court ruling, since only municipal courts had ruled so far.

Mayor John Rogers said he and Administrative Director Kip Molenaar were satisfied with the changes to the legislation Lyons had made which reflected legislation passed in Summit County and upheld by the Summit County Court of Common Pleas.

"I just think it's important that council understand that the language of the ordinances that are to be passed tonight with regards to the cyber café do not necessarily limit the number of cafes in our community," Rogers said, and suggested council might wish to add language to address that issue.

Council President Andrew Rose said he did not believe there would be a problem with too many cafes coming to the city.

The ordinance states that there is a legal controversy about the legality of the businesses but the city needed to regulate the businesses.

The administration and council find that it is in the best interest of the city of Mentor-on-the-Lake that such amusement centers be licensed and that a license fee and amusement tax be imposed upon such establishments in order, inter alia, to finance the costs of said enforcement," states part of the ordinance.

The ordinance regulates sound levels, hours of operation, amount of liability insurance and information required on the application for license; requires an annual game room license fee of \$5,000 and a monthly mechanical device license fee of \$40 for each machine.

In other business:

*** Due to the heavy rains,** firefighters went out to about 13 homes to help homeowners with flooding issues. Most of the flooding was in the Overlook Beach Park and Salida Road areas.

"Of the 13 or so, three or four of them were sanitary backups, but the other properties were storm water," Rogers said. "I've asked the fire chief to take a look at those properties, to see if we've been called in the past."

Service Director Duane Bailey will follow up on the information to see which areas need to be looked at for possible problems. Sanitary

sewers are the responsibility of the county. Depending on where the problems are, they might be the responsibility of the homeowners.

"I can't take care of the drain tile around the perimeter of your home, but if there's an issue with something downstream from your house that causes a backup, then we might be in a position to address it," Rogers said.

The mayor suggested legislation be amended concerning requiring information about ballplayers and where they lived. He felt the information was no longer necessary, and was asking Lyons to redraft the legislation for council to consider.

* A resident who had about eight inches of water in his basement told council the firefighters who responded were very professional and he appreciated the help.

* Desirea Thompson of West Lawnfield said her home has been hit two times in the past eight months when impaired drivers failed to negotiate the turn. She asked council if some type of barrier could be provided to protect her home.

Rogers told her he was aware of her problem and would discuss it with Bailey.

* Council suspended the rules and passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of a police car from Classic Ford

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and declaring an emergency.

Rogers said previously the practice had been to replace police cars every three years, two vehicles at a time. The car being replaced is six years old and the police chief had requested two new cars, but was only being given one because of budget constraints.

Vehicle requests from the Service Department were rejected.

Rose said one good reason to make this purchase is that it is the last year the Crown Victorias will be available and when new models are purchased, the light bars and other equipment will not be able to be transferred from an older car or will need modification in the future.

The next regular meeting of council will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 22.

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